SPEECH
OF
Mr. C. M. Ingersoll, of Connecticut,
Delivered in the House of Representatives, March 31, 1852, on the Democracy of Connecticut—The Slave Question.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union (Mr. Hibbard in the chair) on the Homestead Bill—

Mr. INGERSOLL said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is not my purpose to discuss the subject-matter now before the committee.

If an apology were necessary for the course of debate which I shall pursue, all will admit that it might be found in the line of safe precedents set by older and more experienced members who have addressed the House at its present session.

My remarks may take somewhat of a personal turn, and if an apology for this were necessary, gentleman will, I trust, be disposed to grant it, when they consider that I have been honored with a seat in this body without any public pledges, written or oral, and without a public address delivered upon the great questions which have so recently occupied the public mind both North and South. It seems to me, therefore, due to the constituency I have the honor to represent—a constituency I am proud to say unsurpassed by any in this Union in point of learning, intelligence, industry, patriotism, and morals—that I should at least give them some acknowledgment for the generous support with which they honored me on my election to this body.

In the remarks which I shall submit, I shall endeavor to respond to what I believe to be the sound opinions of my own district and State in regard to that "vexed question" which has for years past so unhappily produced animosities and heart burnings between the two great divisions of our common country, and which I sincerely believe has recently brought this Union upon the verge of dissolution.

Mr. Chairman, the Democratic State Convention of Connecticut, which met recently at New Haven, among other resolutions, adopted the following:

"*Resolved*, that the principle of a strict construction of the powers granted by the Constitution of the United States forms a fundamental part of the creed of the American Democracy, and that the application of this radical principle will maintain in their integrity the rights of the States, will furnish the most effectual antidote against the centralizing tendencies of the Federal Government, and will preserve the Constitution and the Union, making a confederacy of State equal to the task of bearing peaceable sway over the North American continent.

"*Resolved*, That the Democratic party of this county is essentially, from its principles and its component elements, the true Union party—abstaining from the exercise of doubtful powers on the part of the Federal Government, and upholding the rights of the States, it has preserved the integrity of our political institutions; that it has maintained the honor, developed the power, extended the area, and promote the prosperity of the Republic.

"*Resolved*, That the Democracy of Connecticut, acting through their State Conventions, have never, amid all the excitement which has prevailed for some years past, given the slightest aid or comfort to sectional animosity; and that they have passed no resolution at war with the creed of the National Democracy; and that, having last year fully expressed their acquiescence in the compromise measures of Congress, they can now proudly point to their official proceeding, for a series of years, as sustained by fanaticism, and embracing principles as broad as the Union.

"*Resolved*, That we will cheerfully abide by the decision of the Democratic Convention which is to meet in Baltimore in June next; and that, from whatever quarter of the Union the nominee may be selected, we pledge him in advance the entire and hearty support of the Connecticut Democracy."

Every word of these resolutions I subscribe to, and am prepared to defend, and I shall make them a sort of text for what may follow from my lips to-day.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to discuss the abstract question of slavery much less to affirm that I am in favor of white or black slavery, or to stand forth as its champion; it is a matter foreign to the issue which I propose to make. Nor is it necessary that I should discuss the mere question of African slavery as it existed before the Revolution, while we were colonies; as it existed in the States after we formed our Constitution, or as it exists now in the South. If it is a curse, as some men call it, it is one which falls upon the slaveholder, and for which we of the North are in no way accountable, and which should draw from us regret at its existence, and sympathy rather than rebuke, towards the descendants of those who with our forefathers fought shoulder to shoulder for that Declaration which made us free, and for that Constitution which secured to us freedom. It is an evil, says the philanthropist. Admit it—what then? Look into our social system, and behold evil surrounding us on every side. Why, sir, the very life which men hold so dear is made up of evils and blessings—they are the hopes of youth blasted—the energies of manhood destroyed—the sorrows and decrepitude of old age—these, with the good men enjoy, makes up the sum total in reckoning of human life; and it is the very existence of evil which makes man prize the good which falls to him.—And if this rule holds true in the social, how much more should look for it in the political, which owes all its possesses to the social state? Who will tell me of a political State that has existed from the earliest dawn of government, which has been free from evils? The philanthropist may, with the lantern of Diogenes, look for it, but in vain.

Mr. Chairman, I have watched the slavery agitation, which has been and is so rife in our midst, with much solicitude. A child of common understanding may see where it is tending, and the point at which it will arrive, unless "the sober second thought" of the North nips it now in its full-grown bud.

I have no sympathy with abolition agitation, or what, in the parlance of the Buffalo Convention, goes by the name of free-soil agitation; and I believe the intelligent people whom I represent agree with me in the views I entertain of its effects. I stand not here to arraign the motives of men, much less to question the honest intentions of those, many of them, at least, who uphold politicians in the war they are covertly making upon the institutions and the peace of the country. But when the Democracy of the North, in their efforts to preserve inviolate the constitutional rights of the States, are told here, as we were the other day by the honorable member from Massachusetts, [Mr. Rantoul,] that they are "eating Southern dirt," I take this occasion to say, that my democracy teaches me no fellowship, politically, with agitators who scarcely merit the rebuke of an offended people, which, in times gone by, fell upon the head of Arnold, and the whiter head of Aaron Burr.

And let us stop here and see what position the honorable member from Massachusetts, who accuses the Northern Democracy of eating "Southern dirt," himself has occupied. It was in the year 1838, that Mr. Rantoul wrote a letter to the effect, if I am right, that slavery ought to be abolished by Congress in the District of Columbia, and forbidden in the Territories, and that Congress had full power to do so. I have not his letter by me, but I think I cannot be mistaken about the fact.

In 1840, 1844, and 1848, the honorable member pretended to act with the political party which, by resolves, deprecated all interference of the Abolitionists; and, at the Democratic State Convention of Massachusetts, in 1848, he was one of a committee which reported a resolution which reads as follows:

"*Resolved*, That this convention is opposed to the exercise of *any jurisdiction*, by Congress, upon the matter of slavery in the Territories."

He also went with the party which favored the annexation of Texas to its Union, and the Mexican war. He *now* says—if I understand his position—that he always continued in the belief of the doctrines of his letter of 1838, and that he did not believe a word of the resolve of 1848, which he aided in reporting, or which, at all events, went to the country under his sanction.

The question now is, whether this avowal helps his political character for sincerity? In May, 1851, at a mass Democratic convention, called in his district, and "called," to use his own language before that convention, as reported in the "Commonwealth" of April 3, 1851, "as I suppose at *my suggestion*;" and six months (bear in mind) after the fugitive slave law had passed Congress, and after he had gone through repeated unsuccessful trials for an election to this body, he came out against the constitutionality of the fugitive slave law!

Now, why, if the honorable member did not believe that the doctrines of the Democratic party, in regard to slavery, were, in 1848, sound, did he not THEN come out and oppose them, instead of remaining quiet and permitting resolutions, the doctrines of which he did not believe in, to go forth to the country indorsed by his name? And is it for the gentleman now to taunt me, and those who think with me, with "eating Southern dirt?" But I have digressed too much. I leave it to the gentleman to satisfy, if he can, the world, and particularly the party who loved, in other days, to honor what they then believed to be his principles and his talents, in regard to his course. He has not yet been able to satisfy me.

Sir, the efforts of the class of politicians just spoken of point to but one issue, and that the rule or ruin of this Union; and with such an issue before me, shall I hesitate where to stand? No, sir. Give me the Union as it is, rather than what goes by the name of liberty, with anarchy and civil war the result. Give me the "*E Pluribus Unum*" which I now live under, rather than the "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" of a licentious French Republic.

I speak as a Northern—a Connecticut man; proud of my State, which sent more of her sons to the battle-field of the Revolution than any other State in proportion to her population; proud of her institutions of learning, her common schools, her quiet abodes of religion, of industry, and of thrift; and proud of her adventurous citizens, whose hardy enterprise leads them to the four quarters of the globe; and I say that the "land of steady habits" loves too much the Union as it is, and she and the whole North are indebted too much to it for her and their prosperity ever to countenance treason against it.

But, sir, I know I may be met here with the cry of these agitators, that there is no danger of dissolution;—it is a part of the policy of these sentinels "on the watch-tower of freedom," while they apply the torch, to cry, "All's well;" but who, sir, that has listened to the facts which have come out in the debates upon this floor, at this session, of the honorable members from Mississippi, can for a moment doubt it? Why, sir, the very fact that men *talk* of secession, is enough to rouse the patriot to his sense of duty—is sufficient to warn us of the volcano which is under our feet. Let us pause for a moment, and see by contrast where we stand. During the late war with Great Britain, a convention of the New England States met at Hartford—that convention, it is well known, sat with closed doors, and the seal of secrecy was put upon its members. It was in my opinion, as unworthy a conclave as ever met together; and I blush for my native State, that it was ever permitted to hold its sittings within the borders of Connecticut. What was the object of that convention? Nothing was positively known at the time, but suspicion—that suspicion which, as Randolph once said on a memorable occasion, is often "more than equal to the most damning proof," proclaimed that it met to take measures for the secession of the New England States from the Union. You know, sir, how the public mind received this startling news, and the bitter and well-merited indignation which went up from all parts of the Union against this treasonable assemblage. Sir, the rebuke of an insulted people followed its members to their graves, not one of whom hardly dared present himself afterwards to the people for their suffrages. Suppose, sir, that at that time, any one had predicted that in less than half a century secession would be openly advocated; who doubts but that he would have been considered, if not a traitor to his country, at least a fit subject for the lunatic asylum?

But what are we now witness to in this age of reason and progress in government? Why, sir, when, above all other times and seasons, we should prize the Union of ours, whose ægis covers the Atlantic and the Pacific shores—whose prosperity is a wonder even to ourselves—whose flag is mistress of the sea, and under whose ample folds the oppressed of every nation are taking refuge, we see conventions openly called, presses openly advocating, and orators proclaiming from the housetops—"secession," and "dissolution;" and the people discussing that, which to think of, even at the time just alluded to, the public mind rose as one man to rebuke.

And yet we are told that there is no danger in all this. Surely

"It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more near the earth than she was wont,
And makes men mad."

Mr. Chairman, the secession of a sovereign State from this Union is by some persons considered a very easy act to perform, where there is a will (and God grant it may never arise) to do it. Whether it is a constitutional or revolutionary right which must be exercised, is a question which I have no time to discuss here. I prefer to look at the practical bearing of the result, should the issue of secession ever be made. Suppose a State determines upon secession, what power (I speak not of "right") of the Federal Government, under the Constitution, will force it to remain in the Confederacy?—Has it any power? In theory, even, it is questionable to some minds, while in a practical point of view it is powerless.—What a Government formed upon a compact and a compromise, and founded upon the will and affection of the people governed, and deriving all its strength from the popular voice, compelling the people of a sovereign State, at the point of the bayonet, to remain in a Union whose only bond is good will and affection. The idea is at war with every principle of our republican Government. But if it is carried out, what then? Tell me the worth of that State to this Union which is kept to us only by force of powder and ball.—Let a State determine upon secession, and while the strong arm of Federal authority cannot force it to return to its place in the friendly galaxy of stars which compose the Union, it will be no easy undertaking to persuade it back to the point it before occupied by the side of its sister States in the Confederacy.

Mr. Chairman, the people of the North have not, until of late, aroused themselves to a knowledge of the ruin which has threatened the Union. Immersed in business, and bent on the pursuit of honest gain, they have been unmindful of the danger which has surrounded them; while designing men and politicians, with selfish ends, have been sporting with the institutions of the country, like a child with a bauble. The political question of slavery in the States or in the Territories, the Federal Government has nothing in my opinion, to do it with. If I find the culture of tobacco unprofitable, choose to plant my field with corn, I have no right to destroy my neighbor's field, or abuse him, because he continues to plant a weed which, in my opinion, forced upon me by my own experience, is destroying his land and which, its effects, has an injurious influence upon the health of the community around us. No more right has the State of Connecticut to say to South Carolina. Your slave labor is unprofitable; *we* have found it so, therefore *you* must abolish it. If I and my friend from Virginia are owners of a tract of land, which he and I contributed to purchase, I have no exclusive right to tell him how that land shall be cultivated or managed, nor has he that right over me: and so it is with the Territories belonging to this Government—it is not in the power of the Federal Government to say that Connecticut may go into them with *her* factory mills, and that Virginia cannot enter them with *her* property.

Mr. Chairman, whoever has listened, upon this floor or elsewhere, to the speeches of those gentlemen who claim to be the exclusive friends of what they term the anti-slave influence in this country, must have remarked the frequent expressions of "liberty," and "humanity," with which they bound, and the taunts of "African oppression," which is so freely lavished upon the ears of those whose notions of the institutions of this Government do not correspond with their own; as if these gentlemen were the only pure-minded men in the land, and reflected the sound views always held upon the slavery question at the North.

Now, sir, I believe I am as good a friend to liberty and humanity as the most violent Abolitionist or Free-Soiler in this Hall of Congress; and I further believe that the illustrious men of revolutionary times, who helped to frame our Constitution, had as strict notions of the "right of man," as any of its advocates in this our day any generation.

It is curious to look into the history of the States of this Confederacy, and examine the positions which they have occupied in regard to this matter of slavery. Let us see how New England has at times stood.

It is well known, sir, that in the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, the subject of slavery and the slave trade was a prominent topic of debate. Up to this time the States had a right to import slaves from Africa, or from any part of the globe. This subject was referred in the Convention to a committee to report upon, and that committee reported in favor of stopping the slave trade after the year 1800. The South were not satisfied with the restriction proposed, and the subject was again referred back to the committee who reported the limit of 1800, and the committee finally reported to extend the time to the year 1808. This report was accepted, and the result became a part of the Constitution. Now, let gentlemen look at the record of the Convention, and see what States voted to extend the duration of the slave trade, from the time originally reported to the convention. What do we find, sir? Why, that the only New England States then represented in the Convention—Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts—voted to extend the duration of this great evil while Virginia, a slave State, and the States about Virginia, voted in the negative. Yes, sir; and whom do we find from Connecticut, as members of that Convention? I will mention but two of them—men of pure hearts, and patriots in the times which tried men's souls—the one, Roger Sherman, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the other Oliver Ellsworth, afterwards Chief Justice of the United States. And these are the men who, had they lived in this our day, would probably have been told by the honorable member from Ohio, [Mr. Giddings,] not now in his seat, that they were "following the crack of the slave-drivers' whips," and such like generous expressions, so freely used by the honorable gentleman during this session. Now, sir, these illustrious patriots did not like slavery *per se* any more than do the noisy declaimers of abolition on this floor; but they were men who loved their country more than injustice, and they looked at this slavery question like practical, sensible men, with the good of the Union and the prosperity of New England at heart.

Again: in this same Convention, when it was moved to insert that provision in the Constitution, which provides for the delivery of fugitives from service, New England voted with the same unanimity as before in favor of the provision.

Sir, it is almost unaccountable how men, claiming to be Americans, in view of the dangers which threatened the country during those debates, with the history of that Convention before them, will persist in this crusade they are making upon the Union and the rights of the States.

And what ally have these agitators in the war they are waging upon the peace and prosperity of the country?

England, the enemy, the inveterate enemy of America and everything American. England, who never yet acted without a motive of self-agrandizement, and who did not abolish slavery in her West India colonies till she foresaw that those colonies were destined to languish, while her East India possessions, bringing golden treasures to her vaults, where the points to which her own energies should be exerted: and now we witness a member of the British Parliament landing upon our shores to lecture us upon the horrors of slavery, and inciting our citizens to oppose the laws of this Union. And who is this worthy pioneer of modern English philanthropy?—I refer to the notorious George Thompson, the Representative of the Tower Hamlets of the city of London. I invite gentlemen to look upon the condition of the district this man represents in the English Parliament.

In the summer of 1851, some Americans were permitted, under the safe-conduct of a posse of her Majesty's police officers of the city of London, to take a look into the situation of the people they understood this agitator represented in the English House of Commons. The House will pardon me, if I read to them a faithful description of one or two scenes of vice and misery they witnessed, almost under the battlements of the Tower of London itself, and of which notes were taken in the day and time of it, and for the truth of them I can vouch:

"We now threaded our way through a long, dark street, or alley, and of a sudden found ourselves in a dignity hall, filled with the fumes of tobacco, beer, and gin, and where some sixty persons were collected, a portion sitting on benches around the room, smoking pipes and drinking, while the greater portion were shuffling in the dance, to the music of an old blind fiddler in the corner. There were a dozen, or more, women, and as many children, in the motley crew. 'Do you know where you are!' asked the police guide. 'No, was the reply.' 'Surrounded, he continued, by pickpockets and thieves! and look, you see that man and girl whose hair is cropped? They are but recently from Newgate.'

"We left this place to go to another of the same kind, but worse than the former.

We passed through dark and dreary lanes, the stillness of death only broken by the occasional churl or bark of a dog, or the oaths of the drunken inmates of the dens, with windows and doors all barred and bolted, and the light shut up within. We passed by, and we were now in the worst part of London! in a city of thieves and vagabonds, with hardly an honest being, except policemen, within sound of a pistol! We entered a low, arched gateway, and at its terminus stopped. The officer rapped at the door; at last it was opened, and such a scene! In a long dimly lighted, smoke-begrimed room, with rafters and a roof once whitewashed, but now covered with smoke and dirt, were some seventy men, women, and children most of them returned convicts from Botany Bay. As the policemen entered, they stood aghast and they gradually receded and crouched in the corners and along the wall, as the policemen came amongst them. The officers told them that they had came merely on a visit, to conduct the strangers who accompanied them, and that they had nothing to fear. They gradually regained their composure, and after awhile got up a sparring-match, and afterwards a dance, in which a young girl of fourteen years, the daughter of a noted burglar, and the pet of this den, danced the hornpipe.—Among this motly crew, we had pointed out to us thieves, burglars, and one murderer, who, but six months before, had escaped the gallows through some technical point which came up on his trial. From here we went to other dens less notorious, but bad enough, and to dancing saloons filled with drunken sailors and women, many of them unable to stand. And now we started for the neighborhood of the 'Tower,' the poor beggar's home, and the abode of misery, poverty and degradation. We visited several places where for a half penny a night the poverty-stricken, who by day hung about the London wharves, may find a place to lay their heads; and what a scene was before us as the policemen opened the doors of these wretched abodes, and turned his dark-lantern round that its rays might fall upon the floor upon which we now stood! There they lay upon dirty straw and paper-shavings, covering the floor, in small rooms, with hardly what might be termed a window, to let in a breath of air or the light of heaven—men, women, and children all huddled like swine together, with hardly rags to cover, them, to the number of thirty and forty in a room!"

And this, sir, is the district represented by the individual who joins hand in hand with Garrison and his associates, in exclamations of holy horror at the existence of an institution in this country, which, was forced upon us, against the wishes of the colonists, and which the States alone, where slavery exists, can, under the Constitution, regulate.

Look at the present condition of Ireland, brought to its present state by English legislation, and British oppression. Behold a country, intended by God for the happiness of the most virtuous people upon the globe, brought by English law and English neglect, to a poverty which steeps poor humanity to its very lips! Look to England! behold her, proud and arrogant, filled with self-conceit: her East India possessions and the far-distant colony of Australia bringing to her lap the treasures of her store; while Ireland, who gave to her a general, the conqueror of Napoleon, sits knocking at her doors, crying for bread, and exhibiting her children dying and dead from hunger.

Let me read to the House one or two, among many scenes, from an eye-witness, in the summer of 1849, in that ill-fated isle:

"Between Cork and Killarney, there was little to glad the eye or the heart—the country itself, intended for the home of industry and thrift, is now in progress of rapid decay. Miserable bog-huts line the road side—huts with no windows, and where the swine and his owner have an equal home. The people are the most poverty-stricken being ever looked upon covered with rags, pale, and emaciated, they line the road-side, casting an imploring eye to all who pass by. Some of the huts were of turf and mud, and hardly high enough to enable a man to sit upright in them."

Again:

"We stopped at the little town of Sardeen, on the banks of the Shannon, and we visited two or three huts, where the inmates were boiling *sea weed* for their dinners; and this, we were informed, was all they had had to live upon for weeks."

Again:

"We had now arrived in the country of Galaway. Words can give you but a faint idea of the misery which we saw upon every side. All along the road we passed roofless cottages, or cabins, where the landlord had burnt the roofs over the heads of his poverty-stricken tenants, in order to force them to leave the land! and near by each ruin we saw the poor tenants occupying kennels dug out of the road side—the poor creatures, as they crawled out to beg a penny of the traveler, had hardly rags enough to cover them; and several boys were in a complete state of nudity. One woman we met told us that she had left six children starving in her cabin, and had then walked ten miles in quest of something for her and her little ones to eat; and that she had not tasted a morsel for the last twenty-four hours.

"The most frightful picture in this scene, where all was desolation, was that of a little girl of about twelve years.—She came up to us, leading a little brother borth worn by hunger to skeletons. They were so weak from starvation that they could hardly move their limbs! Those children had, the week before, lost both father and mother from hunger, and the little boy and girl lived in their hut near by. We visited this hut, and found nothing in it but an iron kettle and some *rushes* which the little ones had gathered by the roadside to sleep upon."

Again:

"Near the town of Clifden, we saw a poor boy, of about fifteen year old lying in the gutter of the road, apparently in a dying state. We stopped, and asked him what was the matter? He faintly replied, 'Hunger.'

"Passing along the road, we saw smoke issuing from a hole in a bank on the side of the road. We stopped, and out of the hole crept a child—then another, and then the mother, with an infant in her arms.—woman told us that her husband had left her two weeks before in quest of food.'

"Further on, we passed another of these burrows. A man lived there with his four children. He approached us with, 'for God's sake, give us something to eat. I and my little ones are dying.'"

Oh, there is enough in all this to sicken the heart of everything of English influence in the affairs of this country.

Mr. Chairman, I have thus given, in as concise form as possible, my views of what I believe to be the feelings of the people of my district upon the all absorbing question of slavery in the States and Territories of this Union.

Upon the question of the compromise, I believe the people of Connecticut to be sound, and that they will abide by in good faith, and with an honest determination to carry out all the provisions of its several parts. I do not know that I can better describe the feelings of the people of Connecticut in regard to it, and in opposition to all slavery agitation, than by reading the following call for a public meeting in New Haven, signed by about one thousand names, comprising the most worthy citizens of the place, of all professions and callings, during the agitations consequent upon the passage of the compromise measures, in December a twelvemonth since. It is as follows:

"The undersigned, believing that any alteration of the compromise measures adopted at the last session of Congress is not only inexpedient but that it is the duty of every good citizen of this Republic to support and vindicate the same, do therefore recommend that a public meeting of the citizens of this place, without any distinction of party, be convened, to express our united determination that the same shall be executed to their fullest extent, and our united opposition to any agitation of the subject, or the subject of slavery in any form."

And now, sir, thanking the House for its attention to these imperfect remarks of mine, I will conclude by quoting the eloquent and patriotic language of a venerable speaker at that meeting—one of the most learned divines of New England, and Professor of Divinity in that old Institution, which educated a Calhoun, and others of both the North and the South's best sons. I refer to the learned Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor, Professor of Theology in Yale College:

"Thus far we have passed through the storm; I hope it is over; I am afraid it is not; I am afraid there are evils yet to come—but I think the prospect brightens. I do think that we have no reason to believe that, though surrounded with distracting causes and influences, the people are coming to right views, and that here we have indications that the God of our fathers cares for us. He is, I trust, restraining the madness of the people, and that in his own good time, amid the roaring of the tempest, he will say to the winds, 'Cease,' and to the waves, 'Be still.'—Stand, then, my fellow-citizens, by law! stand by the Constitution of our country; that Constitution—why, sir, like the atmosphere around us, it blesses us every breath we draw; we wake, we sleep, we talk, we think, we hope, we rejoice every moment under its influence. Our commerce that floats on every sea, our trade in city and in country, the harvests that wave in our fields, the cattle on our thousand hills, aye, sir, every flower that blooms in our garden, and every bird that sings in these green trees, all, all are under the guardianship of the Constitution. It is like the providence of that God whose gift it is, and watches us with an eye that never slumbers, and protects us with a hand that is never weary. What would become of us, if the Constitution were trampled in the dust? No, sir; as has been said, so say I, with all my heart and soul—if any of my fellow-citizens do not value the Constitution enough to defend it, they are not worthy of the blessings it gives them. [Cheers.] I say again, let us stand by the Constitution and the law, and as some one has said, as near as I can remember, 'I would not merely protect it with the shield of honest Ajax, I 'would protect it also with a wall of brass; 'and when this would not serve the purpose of protection, then would I circle it 'with the living hearts of my country men.' In its defense, I, we, all would rally, till the last pulse of life, and the last drop of blood were expended, to save the Constitution!"

Beautifully Said.

We make the following beautiful extract on the Homestead Exemption Law, from a letter recently written by Judge Dillahanty of Tennessee:

"Secure to each family whose labor may acquire a little spot of free earth, that it can call its own—that will be an asylum in times of adversity, from which the mother and the children, old age and infancy, can still draw sustenance and claim protection, though misfortune may rob them of all else, and then feel that they are still free, still entitled to walk on the green earth, and breath the free air of heaven, in defiance of the power and potency of accumulated wealth and the domineering of the pretending and ambitious. The sacredness of that consecrated spot will make them warriors in the time of eternal strife. 'Those shocks of corn,' said Xenophon, 'inspire those who raise them with courage to defend them. The largest of them in the field is the prize exhibited in the middle of the field to crown the conqueror.'

"Secure a home to every family whose honest labor may obtain one, against the weakness, vices and misfortunes of the father, and you will rivet the affections of the child in years of manhood by a stronger bond than any consideration that could exist. He will remember where he gamboled in his youth, the stream upon whose limpid waters he has bathed, and the family alter where he felt a mother's love and the green spot within that little homestead where sleep the loved and the lost."

THE FETE OF THE TENTH OF MAY IN PARIS.—The most extensive preparations were making in Paris, at last accounts, for the fete of the tenth of May, the day set apart to glorify the "nephew of his uncle." It is stated that thirty thousand rockets with golden rain, will be fired at once, at night, making a bouquet six times larger than the discharge with which exhibition of fire works are usually concluded in Paris. Six thousand soldiers, stationed upon the heights of Choillot, are to keep up an unremitting fire of Roman candles, from 9 o'clock to 11.—60,000 soldiers are to take the oath of fidelity, and everything else is to be on an equally monstrous and unbounded scale.

DISCOVERY OF YET ANOTHER PLANET.—It was recently announced that Mr. Gasparis, at Naples, had discovered a new Asteroid, the fifth first seen by him. By the last steamer information was received that Mr. Luther, at the observatory of Bilk, near Dusseldorf, had recently found yet another, with a Right Ascension of about 12 hours, and a north declination of about 8 degrees, which is the seventeenth planet now known to exist between Mars and Jupiter, all of which were unknown fifty years ago.

DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION OF ARKANSAS.—The Democratic State Convention of Arkansas was held at Little Rock on the 3d inst. Gen Conway was nominated for Governor, and delegates appointed to the National Convention with instructions to support either Douglas or Buchanan for President and Gen. Pillow for Vice President. The Convention re-affirmed the Virginia resolutions of 1799, and the Baltimore platform of 1848.

IRISH IN THE UNITED STATES.—A writer in the London Times estimates that from 1826 to 1850, there have settled in the United States 1,549,351 Irishmen, of whom 250,000 have since died, leaving 1,299,351 still alive. The number settled in Canada is about 250,000.

MONUMENT TO COL. RICHARD M. JOHNSON.—Launetz, an artist, of New York, is occupied with the execution of a monument in marble, to the memory of Richard M. Johnson, ordered by the State of Kentucky.

GOLD FROM EUROPE.—Letters from Liverpool, per Atlantic, state that there is great probability of large shipments of gold from thence to New York. The Europa had $100,000 engaged on Boston account.

☞ It is said the Hon. Wm. Wright formerly a Whig member of Congress from New Jersey, and the late whig candidate for Governor of that State has joined the Democratic party.

Going in a Steamer with a Lunatic Captain.

Recently it was stated that Capt Floyd of the steamship Washington, was deranged, and it was afterwards stated that he had recovered and was about to take command again. The Deutsche Reichs-Zeitung gives some extracts from a journal of the late voyage from New York to Southampton, kept by one of the passengers, which show that the malady of the commander repeatedly came near destroying the vessel, and losing the lives of many if not all on board. The Captain repeatedly changed the course of the ship, and whenever the second mate gave the ship another direction, the captain changed it back again, though it was evident to all on board that the course was not the right one. The narrator after relating many escapes, says:

"Just before sunset we reached Land's End. A little distance off from it, on the water, are two pretty high cliffs, Longship, (?) on one of them a light-house.—Our course was directly upon them. The Captain, who was walking and back and forward, himself gave the orders to the helsman, and the course was unchanged though we every instant came nearer to the rocks. An agitation was soon apparent among the officers as well. The first and second mates, the doctor and the engineer conferred together. The first mate went to the Captain again and again, to call his attention to our dangerous nearness, and the doctor did the same. 'Yes, I know,' was the reply, and was utterly impossible to prevail on the Captain to give orders. A German Captain, who was among the passengers, and who had sailed a ship for sixteen years, spoke to him; in vain. The the passengers, and even the doctor, went to the wheel and gave orders to steer to the west, in order to avoid the constantly approaching danger. The helsman, at first, unwillingly yielded; but the Captain perceiving it, went up to the wheel commanding, 'South!' Those standing near, begged him not to do this; repeating to h m that he was risking the lives of all his passengers. The sole answer was, 'You have nothing to do here!'

"More vehement orders were given by the passengers to the helsman to steer West, and he obeyed them. The Captain renewed his counter-order, adding, 'I'll shoot you down if you don't do what I say.' The helsman anew represented the danger, and the certainty of losing the passengers' lives. 'Let them go to hell!' was the reply. Hereupon the passengers and officers surrounded him, crowded him away from the wheel, the Doctor declaring him out of his mind. He resisted, but was carried below to his state-room, whence his pistols and other weapons—which he now sought for, that he might use them—had been prudently removed. We were now free of him on deck, a westerly direction was taken, and we avoided the rock by a pistol-shot. Had we kept the same course a few minutes longer, the passengers and ship would have been lost. The intention of the Captain to wreck us was evident, both from his words and actions; and how near was the danger, was plain from what was said by one of the sailors who left the wheel, exclaiming that we were going ashore in a few minutes!"

The command was taken from the captain and given to the first mate, and they soon after reached Southampton. It was also determined to lay before the American Consul in Southampton, and request him to remove Captain Floyd from the ship. All the passengers and one of the offices declared they would not go to Bremen with her if Capt. Floyd remained on board."

The California Fugitive Slave Bill.

The bill which has passed the California Legislature, in relation to fugitive slaves, provides for the surrender, to their original masters, of all colored people in California, who were slaves before they were brought into California, thus virtually repudiating the doctrine that California was a free territory by virtue of its old Mexican law, and that slaves could not be held there to service after the conquest.—Mr. Van Buren, a member of the Legislature, who figured in New York at the last Presidential election, as free-soiler, voted for it; while Mr. Broderick, formerly a New York hunker, bitterly opposed its passage. It is said there are no slaves in California to which the bill will be applicable.

Wm. Sydney Smith, Esq., Secretary of the English Consul at Havanna, has been tendered a public dinner by a number of the citizens of New Orleans, for his kindness to the American prisoners in Cuba. Mr. Smith has excepted the compliment.

☞ The expenses of the public schools of Philadelphia, for the present year, are estimated at $435,938.

☞ Land Warrants, in New York, are quoted at $125 for 160 acres; at $65 for 80 acres, and at $32,50 for 40 acres.—The market, however, is very unsettled, and will remain so until the Senate disposes of the homestead bill.

PRESENT FROM POPE PIUS IX.—The American states that the pointing promised by Pius IX to Mrs. Wm. George Read, of Baltimore, is intended for the Catholic church at Pikesville, Baltimore, county, of which the Rev. Mr. White is pastor.

According to some of the Pennsylvania papers, the wheat crop in that State will be a short one this year.

A BLOCK OF MARBLE FROM THE RIVER MEN.—The river men of Pittsburgh propose to the river men of the entire West and South, to unite in procuring a block or blocks, with suitable inscriptions thereon, together with a united subscription, to aid in the construction of the National Monument at Washington.

FRUIT PROSPECTS.—The apple crops throughout West Jersey, it is said, have never been more promising. From present indications, if not injured by frost, the trees will be literally loaded with fruit.